

PROPHETIC DEPARTMENT

FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS. . . . A SIGN

(Second in Series)

By Louis S. Bauman *

Our Lord's Great Olivet Prophecy

As the Lord Jesus Christ "sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, . . . what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3). In reply, among other things, our Lord said:

"Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:4, 5).

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (v. 11).

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before" (vs. 23-25).

Observe that our Lord warned of two grave dangers: First, "false Christs"; second, "false prophets."

First, let us note what fulfillment Israel (and to Israel He was directly speaking) has seen as to "false Christs."

"False Christs" in Israel

Shortly after the utterance of this prophecy, Josephus bore the following testimony: "And now these impostors and deceivers persuaded the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs, that should be performed by the providence of God."

Whether these "impostors and deceivers" posed as "Messiahs" or as "prophets," Josephus does not say. But we do know that since that time, Israel has been plagued with a long line of false Messiahs, accompanied by their chief collaborators—false prophets.

In the year of our Lord 130, there came into Israel, Bar Cochva, his name meaning "the son of a star." Claiming to be the star which Baalam prophesied would rise out of Jacob, he chose a forerunner, obtained a large following, coined his

money, raised an army, and captured Jerusalem. Three years later, when he was slain, the Jew named him Bar Coziva, that is, "the son of a lie." In the year 434, Moses Cretensis came, and promised to deliver the Jews from Crete by dividing the sea and providing passage through it. On the appointed day, the command of the new Moses ran out: "Go forward!" Hundreds of men, women, and children were drowned, and their "Messiah" Julius arrived, deceived thousands of Jews and Samaritans, and, under order of the emperor Justinian, paid the price with his head. Then came the great Mahammed in 620, pretending at first to be the Messiah of the Jews. Unto him the deluded sons of Jacob flocked. One day they found him eating camel's blood! That ended his reign! In 727, Serindrew drew great numbers after him, but soon came to naught. Three false Messiahs with immense followings came: one in France in 1135; one in Persia in 1138; and one in Spain in 1157. The last caused almost all Jews in Spain to be destroyed.

In 1167 came the North African Jew, David Alru. He went so far as to ask the Arabian king to cut off his head, and he would prove his Messiahship by coming to life again. His head is still off! Among other "Messiahs" arriving about this time in various parts of the world, was a Jew, named David Almusser, appearing in Moravia. He claimed he could make himself invisible. They killed him. He became and remained invisible! Then a learned magician David-el-David, posed as the Christ. He also paid the price with his head. Many perished with him. Then Ismael Sophus, a Spanish Jew, raised an army but betrayed his Hebrew Simple Simons by forming a Moslem sect.

In 1502 came Rabbi Asher Lammlein, a German Jew from Austria, inscribing on his banners, "The King of the Jews." Enthusiastic multitudes of Jews and Christians were converted. Suddenly, he went to visit Korah. He is still visiting. In 1534, David Reuben, a court favorite of Charles V, attempted to grasp the scepter of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10). A Portuguese Jew, Rabbi Salomo Malcho, was his prophet. Even Pope Clement VIII received him "with distinction." Attempting to convert the emperor, Reuben was imprisoned, and his prophet, Salomo, was burned at the stake. Apparently, the scepter of Judah was not for Reuben!

In 1666, the most successful of all the false Messiahs appeared, a man named Shabbatai Zwie, claim-



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ing to be "The King of Kings." His forerunner, Nathan, from Damascus addressed him: "To the King, our king, lord of lords, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, who redeems our captivity, the man elevated to the height of all sublimity, the Messiah of the God of Jacob, the true Messiah, the celestial Lion, Shabbatai Zwie." Millions believed, Jews everywhere were in great expectation. Business came to a standstill. The Turkish government took note. To save his head, Shabbatai Zwie turned Mohammedan. His hypocrisy did not work. Regarding him as a dangerous agitator, they took his head from him. It has never been returned.

In 1682 came a German Jew, Rabbi Mordecai. He soon fled for his life—from Italy to Poland. Nothing more was heard of him. "Baron Frank" arose in the middle of the eighteenth century, and reached for the scepter of Jacob. He soon went the way of his predecessors. A few of the faithful still await the return of their "baron" chief. In 1714, Moses Luzzatto arrived, blaring himself forth as "King of Israel." A faithful few still exist in Poland awaiting the return of their "King." The last (up to date) "King of the Jews" sojourned in Germany in 1872. His name was Jakuthiel. He sent a note to the Pope, demanding the peaceful session of Palestine. He joined the company of his predecessors before the Pope responded to his request.

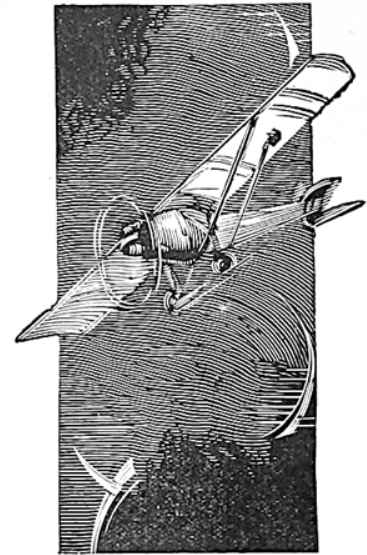
The Olivet Prophecy Still Awaiting Complete Fulfillment

Thus, the prophecy of our Lord has been in process of fulfillment. Many have come in His name, saying, "I am Christ," and have deceived many. But the march of "false Christs and false prophets" through nineteen centuries of time could scarcely be sign of the near approach of an event. The coming and going of the above-mentioned "Messiahs" is not efficient. The prophecy awaits its **complete** fulfillment, for only in the **complete** fulfillment we shall find the "sign" that shall indicate the fall of the curtain upon the age.

A careful study of the entire prophecy reveals that it is only at the end of the age, when the "great tribulation" is at hand, that "there shall arise (the)

Christians who are awake should know the meaning of the things which happen on the earth. God gives warnings and signs as one age is about to close and another to begin. It was dullness on the part of the religionists of Christ's day which caused Him to say, "Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." (Matt. 16:3).

false Christs and false prophets, (who) shall show **great signs and wonders**; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (vs. 23, 24). It is at the time of the revelation of "that man of sin" that there will be "the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (II Thess. 2:3, 9). While false "Messiahs" have come



and gone ever since the prophecy was uttered, and most of them professed the power to work miracles, yet among them all **there has been no resurrection!** No great miracle of any sort has marked their adventures or their descents. "Great signs and wonders" are reserved as accompaniments for the final "false Christs and false prophets." Though they will be energized by Satan, as were Jannes and Jambres when they withstood Moses by casting down their rods to become living serpents, yet neither the "false Christs" nor the "false prophets" will be able to show forth their "power and signs and lying wonders" except by the permissive will of the Almighty. It is "God (that) shall send them (the people left on earth after the translation of the church) **strong delusion**, that they should believe a lie." The "strong delusion" comes as a judgment—sent "because they received not (in an age of grace) the love of the truth, that they might be saved." "Damned" in judicial blindness because they "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (cf. II Thess. 2:8-12)!

The Final Fulfillment of the Olivet Prophecy

Thus the long line of "false Christs, and false prophets" will culminate in the visible manifestation of their supreme heads, "the beast" (Antichrist) and "the false prophet" (Rev. 19:20), whose activities and whose final doom are set forth quite vividly by the seers of Patmos (cf. Rev. 13 and 19:20).

When to Israel "**Messiah the (true) Prince**" came, He was "cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9:25, 26). "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). When to Israel come "**the (false prince that . . . shall destroy the city . . . he shall confirm the covenant (enter into an alliance) with many (of the Jews) for one week (seven years): and in the midst of the week**" (Dan. 9:26, 27)—ah! **then** they will realize their folly when they

"shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place" (Matt. 24:16; cf. II Thess. 2:4). Then shall Israel's eyes be opened—alas! too late!—to the true character of the last of all the "false Messiahs." Then shall they remember the words of the Messiah they rejected: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43).

Then "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) will have come, and nothing can save Israel from utter destruction. However, because of God's covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Israel "shall be saved out of it" (Jer. 30:7; cf. Rev. 12:13-16). In marvelous faithfulness to His immutable covenants, Omnipotence Incarnate will return to earth. He will come at the moment when Armageddon's guns are shaking the hills of Palestine, threatening the utter annihilation of the children of the covenants. In that awful hour of Israel's anguish, as their houses are being rifled and their women ravished, and the whole city falling captive to the maddened sons of lust and hell—"then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" (Zech. 14:2-4).

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem"

On the very spot where He stood, despised and rejected, weeping over the city, there His feet again shall stand! There, in the loving kindness of Joseph, He will mingle His tears of love with the penitential tears of His erring brethren who hated Him without a cause! There, where His bitterest tears of sorrow fell, will fall His gladdest tears of joy, as He lifts again the wings whose shelter was once scorned and spurned (Lk. 13:34). There He will lift up His voice and cry again, but not with sobs: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." And His wandering sheep—"the lost sheep of the house of Israel"—astray in the wake of hireling shepherds for centuries upon centuries—shall hear that cry, the voice of the true Shepherd, and shall know! Out of the flames of Armageddon's furnace they will leap—forth from their hiding places in the wilderness beyond Jordan they will spring—back from "the four corners of the earth" they shall assemble—under His wings to trust. In that day, beneath that shelter, Jacob shall rest securely in the homeland, and none shall make him afraid.

"False Christs" Among the Gentiles

But Israel is not the only nation to be led astray by "false Messiahs." Scarcely a nation on earth has not seen at some time the advent of a deceiver, saying, "I am Christ!" Lilliputian "Christs" swarms through every age and every land. Some time ago, a newspaper gives us a huge headline, telling us of a Los Angeles negro who brazenly announces: "I am Christ!" Even as we write, a card comes to us through the mail and lies here on the

REFLECTIONS

When we study the writings of men, it is well if, after much pains and labor, we find some particles of truth amongst a good deal of error. When we read the Scriptures, all we meet with is truth. In the former case we are like the Africans on the Gold Coast, of whom it is said that they dig pits nigh the waterfalls of mountains abounding in gold, then with incredible pains and industry wash off the sand, till they espy at the bottom two or three shining grains of the metal which only just pays their labor. In the latter case, we work in a mine sufficient to enrich ourselves and all about us.

Bishop Horne.

desk, addressed to the "Members and Officers of the First Brethren Church, Long Beach, California," announcing:

Many are looking, and even expecting the Second Coming of the Messiah!... I have come... Wherefore you must receive ME, or it proves you do not believe; also that you consider the Bible false. Therefore, it is commanded, etc., etc.

A good candidate for the insane asylum, we admit!

Atomic as are such "false Christs" as he aforesaid, yet they present about as creditable credentials as the false "Christs" who make lick-spittle out of the world's intelligentsia.

In India a few years ago, Meher Baba, a long-haired Parsee (priest) of Zoroastrian faith, was hailed by his disciples as "the God-man." Many Indians regard him as Gandhi's "Duru," or spiritual adviser. He proposes to amalgamate all creeds in the common element of love. The last we heard of him (March, 1934), he was headed for America.

A score of years ago, a Persian deceiver by the name of Abdul Baha (his real name being Abbas Effendi), made his headquarters in Palestine and presented himself to mankind as a world Saviour. His yes-men widely circulated the following appeal:

O People!

The Dawning point of the Light of God is Revealed. God is again speaking to us through His Great and Glorious Manifestation, Baha Ullah, and through the "Center of His Covenant, Abdul Baha."

O People!

Remember Christ and how He was rejected. Are you going to repeat that Destructive Episode? Or are you going to arise and trim your Lamps? "The Father whom Christ Foretold has come amongst us!"

He is here!

Among the titles that Baha accepted without protest, we find such as these: "Our God El Ebha," "The Everlasting Father," and "The Lord of the Vineyard." Thousands upon thousands flocked to his banner in Bombay, Mandalay, London, Paris and America. In Persia, it is estimated that one-third of

the entire population worshiped at his shrine. The sad and significant part of it is, not that such a spiritual monster should come, but that when he did come even to enlightened America, many so-called Christian churches—Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Episcopalian and others—threw open their doors and received him with open arms. Standing room was at a premium wherever he went; and, by the way, standing room was all he allowed anybody until his "Most High Majesty" was himself seated! Like all the other Gentile "false Christs," Baha palavared about universal love, social brotherhood, international peace, and the spiritual unity of all religions.

Several years ago, the Theosophical High Priestess, Mrs. Besant, paraded Hindu, Krishnamurti, before the world as its "Christ." He spoke in "tongues." Newspapers in all parts of the earth gave large advertisements to this Messiah-to-be. Thousands in Benares fell flat on their faces before him and worshiped. On his way to America, he stopped in Paris. Great crowds filled the streets to do him homage. His worshipers included society women covered with silks and dazzling jewels, and numbered also famous generals, splendid of physique and weighted with medals. But one day Krishnamurti proved himself more sensible than most of his tribe. He discovered that "a mountain (had) labored and brought forth mouse"—and he was the mouse! Thereupon, he repudiated his Messiahship. But what about the gullibility of the human race? Apparently, the stage is set, and the mind of man is ready, to receive the "angel of light" who crowned by Satan, will present our confused world with a "Saviour." "But the wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:10). Thanks be to God!

Man's Tendency to Man-Worship

Still more astonishing it is to discover that hundreds of thousands dwell in a nation that but a few years ago was considered advanced above all others in the realms of science and philosophy, and cultured to the n-tuple degree—to discover that such a nation is willing to put a halo around the head of a red-handed Jew-baiter, Adolf Hitler. But such is the sight we have lived to see. Mr. Stanley High wrote from Berlin to the *Literary Digest* (Oct. 7, 1933).

The politics of National-Socialism, to a National-Socialist, has a divine origin and Hitler a "Messianic" mission. Some one remarked to me in Berlin that Germany is in a delirium. I think it is more accurate to say that Germany is in an ecstasy. And the ecstasy is religious. In Berlin one of the large art shops along Unter den Linden has a portrait of Hitler in the center of its display window. Hitler's portrait is entirely surrounded, as though by a halo, with

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various copies of a painting of Christ.

"Just how completely Hitler is the victim of a Messianic complex," says Mr. High, "no one can say. So far as I can find out, he does not invite adoration; but he certainly knows how to capitalize it!" The *Times* (London) says that the cell in which *My Struggle* was written has been made into a national shrine. A correspondent for the *New Statesman and Nation* (England), June 3, 1933, writes:

Up till now the religious lessons in the schools of which I have direct knowledge have consisted for the most part of talks about Herr Hitler and the glories of Germany. Children themselves told me that the teachers had said in the religious lessons that Hitler was the second Jesus, but greater than the first, because he has not only one power, but the whole world against him.

"Ah, Mussolini!" cried General Balbo, who led the famous aeroplane flight around the world, "you do not know what he means to us! Mussolini and God are our religion!"

"Often on a deathbed," writes Ralph Norton in the *Sunday School Times* (April 29, 1933), "his (Mussolini's) picture is asked for and reverently kissed."

"Masses of Hindus," says Bishop Whitehead of Madras, "regard Gandhi as an incarnation of deity."

The tendency toward man-worship and the near-deification of political leaders in the present hour becomes a portent of first magnitude. Again, the wise understand. It is written:

"And all the world wondered after the beast...and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?...And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:3-8).

Men may deem themselves "wise," "advanced," cultured," "scientific," but —only those are safe from the approaching "strong delusion" (II Thess. 2:11) whose names are written in the "book" (Rev. 13:8). If Mussolini, Hitler, Lenin, Gandhi, and their type, can and do command the worshipful homage of hundreds of millions now, what will happen when the real "false Christ" shall come in the combined glory of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, and Caesar (Rev. 13:2; cf. Dan. 7:1-7), and when this "false Christ" shall be glorified by a real miracle-working "prophet," even to the making "fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (Rev. 13:13), and making a graven image of "the beast" move and speak (Rev. 13:14, 15)? Verily shall such an one at last sit down "in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thess. 2:4)!

The Master proclaimed the way of safety for His disciples in that day by telling them how they may prevent being deceived by that awful delusion. All "false Christs" arise from "beneath." Only One shall come from "above." To His arch-enemies at His first coming, the true Messiah said: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). They crucified Him for saying it!

Hear Him once again:

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not...For as the Lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:23, 27; cf. Rev. 19:11).

For as the lightning cometh—

Terrible, swift and bright,

Cleaving the heavens asunder

And searing earth with its light,

Out of the storm-cloud leaping

Like a fiery sword-blade's flash,

To the sound of the mighty waters

And the sevenfold thunder's crash,

A vision of flaming glory

That every eye shall see—

Lo, as the lightning cometh

So shall His coming be!

Verily, scoff as men may at simple faith in the personal, visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ, 'coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory' (Matt. 24:30), **THEY WHO SO BELIEVE SHALL NOT BE DECEIVED!**